

TAFA Aims to Turn Lives around with Forever Friendship

Details

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Fundraiser Comedy/Musical Event September 28th Aims to Help TAFA Spread Joy, Save Lives

Up to 50 percent of nursing home residents will die without friends and 75 percent of patients in psychiatric hospitals never receive visitors. The Turn-A-Frown Around Foundation (TAFA) aims to turn this trend around by visiting these individuals and others in various institutions throughout the state.

"When we have a pothole, we call the Department of Transportation and it gets filled. We need a Department of Visitation to fill the 'potholes' of loneliness," said Drew Horn, President and Co-Founder of TAFA on his [website](#). "There are so many people who have a hole in their life that

needs filling and through the power of companionship, we can fill that emptiness with smiles, hugs and a visit from a forever friend.”

To recruit volunteers and build on this mission, TAFAs aim to create Smile Stations throughout the state and, ultimately, throughout the country. “The Smile Station movement has been in my soul for five years,” Drew said, and he is further inspired by the enthusiastic support he has gained from students at Montclair State University. “At MSU, I have more help than ever before and I feel more strongly than ever before that we can end loneliness,” Drew said, adding that the students set up a Smile Station last year and developed a manual for setting up Smile Stations and visiting individuals in institutions. The link to this manual is on the bottom right-hand corner of TAFAs’ home page, <http://turnafrownaround.org>.

“The process of becoming a FOREVER FRIEND will not only erase loneliness in your FOREVER FRIEND’s life, but help them find their self-esteem and self-worth. I use the metaphor that a strong battery attaches itself to a weak battery until the weak battery is strong enough to attach itself to another weak battery. And thus, the domino effect of compassion is started by the commitment to love someone unconditionally,” Horn said in a letter of introduction in the Smile Station Manual. He signed the letter with the following credentials after his name: “MD (Manic Depressive), CPA (Certified Public Annoyance), & WC (World Changer).”

“Personally, I would change CPA to CPI: Commissioner of Personal Inspiration. From speaking with Drew and reading the testimonials on his website, I know he and his troupe of volunteers bring not only friendship to individuals who are lonely and have disabilities, but also hope and a desire to work more to achieve recovery and enjoy life to the greatest extent possible,” said Shauna Moses, Associate Executive Director of the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies (NJAMHAA).

However, part of Horn’s charm is his modesty, and part of his modesty is crediting individuals who have inspired him, most notably Mother Theresa, Jerry Lewis and Patch Adams. In fact, Horn has had the honor of interviewing Patch Adams for a documentary and then traveling with him and other doctors on a “Pain Relieving Tour” in Russia. “It was really something – almost spiritual. I was so beyond humbled. I couldn’t understand how I got so lucky,” Horn said.

In addition to admiring and enjoying Jerry Lewis’ comedic talent, Horn is greatly impressed by Lewis’ decision to use his celebrity status to start a telethon years ago that raised more money in one weekend than many charities raise in one year. Regarding Mother Theresa, Horn said, “No one likes to use the ‘S’ word – sacrifice – but Mother Theresa took a vow of poverty. She showed true compassion and was a pain reliever.”

“I’m the luckiest guy on the planet. When I’m in a tough place, I want to do what I do even more. Like putting a fan on someone on the hottest day – you can’t change the weather, but you can still make a difference in that person’s life,” Horn said. “Unconditional love saved me. It gave me the freedom to do what I want to do.”

“My true passion is to make sure everyone has a FOREVER FRIEND. That keeps me from hiding under the covers when the black darkness of depression hits. I am determined to end loneliness, one friendship at a time,” Horn said.

To support TAFa and promote National Recovery Month – since laughter is known as the best medicine – TAFa and NJAMHAA are co-hosting an event, Laugh, Love, Live, September 28, 2012 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Robert Wood Johnson Conference Center, Hamilton, NJ. For details and to register, visit the Conferences section of www.njamhaa.org.

About TAFa

The Turn-A-Frown-Around Foundation, Inc. (TAFa) is dedicated to the assistance of those who have lost hope--especially those who suffer from psychiatric and physical disorders, lovelessness, isolation, and abuse. The Foundation is meant to be a "missionary" effort of joy, compassion, and unconditional love by giving an abundance of attention to those who are hurting in nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals, group residences, children's homes, or individual shut-ins. We do this by providing an army of caregivers who bring love, laughter, and a listening ear, as well as comedy skits, songs, and testimonials. The Foundation is dedicated to make the last the first, and to motivate a growth of hope in those who lack it. Finally, the Foundation is a mental health advocacy group. We try to bring encouragement and to draw widespread public awareness of many human conditions- both to those who suffer and to those who are surrounded by this suffering. For more information, click [here](#).